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ABSTRACT

Child "domestics" or "domestic workers" are defined here as children under the age of 18 who work in other people's households, doing domestic chores, caring for children and running errands, among other tasks. This digest focuses mainly on the situation of live-in child domestics, that is, children who work full time in exchange for room, board, care, and sometimes remuneration. The digest is divided into the following sections: "Introduction"; "What We Know about Child Domestic Workers"; "The Implications of Their Work for Child Domestic Workers"; "Challenges for Practitioners: Project Responses"; "Challenges for Practitioners: Research and Advocacy; and Is Regulation Possible?" Contains information about some of the major intergovernmental organizations and international and regional nongovermental organizations (NGOs) working on issues addressing child domestic work. Includes extensive selected readings and general references. (BT)

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CHILD DOMESTIC WORK

MAIN ISSUES

DISCUSSION SITE

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➢ *Selected readings*
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INTRODUCTION

Only recently have campaigners against child labour begun to focus their attention on what is probably the largest group of child workers in the world: [redacted]. In industrialized countries and in some emerging economies, there has been a steady decline in child domestic work as more children attend school and aim for a 'modern life' and qualified employment. In other parts of the world, the forces of demand and supply that propel women and children into menial occupations seem to be leading in the opposite direction. This is especially so in societies where the opportunity for employment is limited, labour cheap, poverty widespread, the sense of social hierarchy strong, and human energy rather than the labour-saving appliance still the linchpin of household management.

Definitions

Child 'domestics' or 'domestic workers' are defined in this *Digest* as children under the age of 18 who work in other people's households, doing domestic chores, caring for children and running errands, among other tasks. The *Digest* focuses mainly on the situation of live-in child domestics, that is children who work full time in exchange for room, board, care, and sometimes remuneration. Although children who carry significant domestic workloads in their own homes face many comparable problems (as do, for that matter, other kinds of live-in workers such as shop helpers or hotel workers), their situation is beyond the scope of this *Digest*.

Within every household, a wide variety of domestic tasks need to be undertaken: cleaning, laundry, food preparation, cooking, shopping and looking after young children. In non-industrialized societies, the domestic workload required to support daily life can be extremely heavy, and often includes food production and processing, and walking long distances to gather water and fuel. Women have almost invariably assumed the role of domestic managers, often drawing on their children and other members of the extended family as helpers.

As some societies developed over time, these occupations became more formalized and took on the character of 'employment', with different types of workers — male and female — occupying different roles and undertaking different tasks for payment in cash and kind. In most industrialized societies today, social and economic trends, including rising labour rates and widespread availability of household appliances, have dramatically reduced the numbers of those who earn their living in this way. However, these trends are at different stages in different societies and in many parts of the developing world have yet to make a dramatic impact on the way households are managed.

Domestic service is therefore one of the world's oldest occupations, and one in which children have traditionally played a part. The servant girl, the 'tweeny' (a very young domestic shared *between* two older servants) and the orphaned Cinderella made to earn her keep by serving on others feature widely in pre-20th century literature. When families were very poor or a child orphaned, it was common in every society throughout history — and in some, is still common today — for one or more children to be sent to live in another household (usually, but not necessarily, related). In this placement, they perform tasks in return for shelter, care, nurture, and education or useful instruction. In some settings, these children are seen as additional family members, as if they have been 'adopted'. Legal forms of adoption or guardianship may also be used for the purposes of exploiting such children's labour. The difference between adoption and domestic employment is sometimes hard to pin down.

The important change in recent times is that 'work as upbringing' in the child's own home or the house of a relative or friend is giving way to a commercialized, and therefore more potentially exploitative, arrangement. Long hours, low rewards, lack of childhood development opportunities, lack of love and affection, and other deprivations ensue. Increasingly, the sending out or the taking in of a child is not primarily designed to serve the child's interests, but is the outcome of a transaction in which the traded commodity is the child's labour.

As demand for young domestic workers grows in many societies, their supply also becomes more organized, and recruitment agents — and occasionally traffickers bringing boys and girls across borders from poorer neighbouring countries — are becoming more systematically involved. One result is that more children and young people today are working in households in no way related to their own, often at a considerable distance. They are under the control of adults who, whatever their intention to be nurturing, have as their first concern not the child's well-being but that of their own household — to which the child must contribute. Usually they have chosen to employ a young girl because she is cheaper to hire, is more malleable and will cost less than an adult does to support. This is often the case in modern middle-class households where both partners go out to work, but can no longer rely on the extended family – younger sisters and cousins – for household help. So they seek out the cheapest available alternative.

The attention of researchers and children's rights advocates has primarily focused on the exploitation, abuse and discrimination suffered by child domestic workers, and on the very young age at which some first enter a household other than their own home to serve others as the governing feature of their lives. All these things are to be deplored and are clear contraventions of the rights set out in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). They are also in violation of the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, which specifically prohibits:

> ... any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 is delivered by either or both of his natural parents or by his guardian to another person, whether for reward or not, with a view to the exploitation of the child or young person or of his labour. (Article 1 (d))

Care should be taken, however, in any analysis of the situation of child domestic workers, especially in settings where domestic employment is the norm. Although engaging children at any age below the legal age of employment is an infringement of children's rights, it is not necessarily the case that all child domestic workers suffer gross abuse, neglect or exploitation. For many parents, and for some child

workers, placement in a secure household living at a higher standard than the parental home, under the supervision of relatives or known parent substitutes, may be seen as beneficial. Homes can be good and bad for children, whether their own or others' Abuse at home may prompt children to leave home and seek domestic employment, or may motivate them to prefer a substitute family where they are well cared for; however, most child domestic workers are placed, or sent out, by their families for economic reasons. Sometimes they find employers who look after them well, become attached to them and later try to assure them a good life by — for example — finding them a suitable husband.

The work itself is not necessarily dangerous or inhumane. Since time immemorial, work around the household has been regarded as a natural part of childhood upbringing, especially of girls. Their help is needed in washing dishes, minding livestock, looking after younger children and all the other daily activities that make the household function. Instruction in doing these things correctly is seen in societies generally as a vital preparation for the child's future adulthood, marriage and parental life. Indeed, in traditional settings, the child domestic worker is not considered to be 'employed' at all but merely as an 'extra hand' in an extended family household. However, when this work occupies the entire day, exhausting the child and preventing him or her from attending school and enjoying other rights, including other types of preparation for adulthood, the picture is dramatically altered.

Although it is difficult to position child domestic employment within any hierarchy of hazardous and exploitative child work, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has established a checklist against which to measure the practice on a case-by-case basis. It becomes, according to ILO, among the worst forms of child labour when the child has been sold, is bonded or works without pay; works excessive hours, in isolation or at night; is exposed to grave safety or health hazards; is abused in the household or is at risk of physical violence or sexual harassment; and works at a very young age (some child domestics are as young as five). [1] ❑

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CHILD DOMESTIC WORKERS

Information is scarce about this 'invisible' child workforce — invisible because each child is separately employed and works in the seclusion of a private house, unlike children in a factory or on the street. They do not exist as a group and are difficult to reach and to count. Their jobs are invisible too: domestic work belongs in the informal labour market, is unregistered and does not show up clearly in employment statistics. In addition, since the status of a girl living in the household may be blurred with that of the family, her presence in the home may not show up in census or household survey data. [4] The prevalence of underage domestic work in any setting is especially difficult to assess.

The 'invisibility' of child domestic workers also derives from the fact that the majority are girls. Doing domestic work in a household other than their own is seen as merely an extension of their duties, and the concept of employment is missing. In many value systems, girls' and women's work is still economically disregarded — simply because girls and women do it.

Knowledge about child domestic workers remains patchy for other reasons as well. In societies where using children as domestic workers is not recognized as 'child labour' but as a normal feature of society, motivation to inquire into their situation is likely to be limited. Indeed, even among children's rights advocates, there may be a reluctance to take special notice of child domestic workers, who are seen as a 'cared-for' rather than an exploited group.

Despite these difficulties, some researchers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have undertaken studies, mostly on a small scale, in countries where the practice of child domestic work is common. These include in Africa, Kenya, Morocco, Tanzania, Togo, Senegal and Zambia; in Latin America, Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay and Peru; and in Asia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka. In Latin America, the Confederation of Latin American and Caribbean Household Workers, a network of domestic worker organizations, is also in the process of conducting research on the situation of adult and child domestic

Prevalence of child domestic work

ILO estimates that there are 250 million child workers in the developing world; the proportion represented by child domestic workers is not known, but high. It also estimates that domestic work is the largest employment category of girls under age 16 in the world.[29]

Local studies carried out in the last decade have attempted to estimate prevalence. In **Dhaka, Bangladesh**, as many as 300,000 children work as domestics.[43] In **Haiti**, of an estimated 250,000 child domestic workers or *restaveks*, 20% are 7 to 10 years old. [34] In **Indonesia's** capital, **Jakarta**, alone, an estimated 700,000 domestic workers are under age 18. [12] In **Nepal**, some 62,000 urban domestics are under age 14. [37] In **Lima, Peru**, the number of domestic workers under 18 is estimated at 150,000. [25] In the **Philippines**, there are an estimated 29,000 domestic workers between 10 and 14 years old, comprising 4% of the total 766,000 domestic workers nationwide. The largest concentration (36%) are between 15 and 19 years old. [44] In **Sri Lanka**, an estimated 100,000 children are employed in domestic service and food catering. [16]

Very few studies indicate trends. In **Cotonou, Benin**, there would appear to have been an increase in the numbers of child domestic workers; 100 were identified in 1991; 950 in 1993. [45] By contrast, in a lower middle-class area of **Nairobi, Kenya**, 20% of households employed a child domestic worker in 1981 compared with 12% in 1991 (of which, 11% were under age 10). [70]

Other studies indicate proportions of the child workforce employed as domestic workers. In **Brazil**, 22% of all working children are in domestic service. [29] In **Venezuela**, 60% of working girls aged between 10 and 14 are domestic workers. [29]

workers in seven countries in the region. [14] Support for research has been provided by NGOs (notably Anti-Slavery International and member organizations of the International Save the Children Alliance), ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), and UNICEF, among others.

Some governments are conducting studies to learn more about child labour. In South Africa, for one, the Government's Statistical Service (Statistics South Africa) — in conjunction with ILO and with some technical support from UNICEF — will undertake a large national household survey in mid-1999 to assess the extent and nature of child work, including domestic work by girls and boys. [15]

The information generated by these studies generally shows that, although wide social, cultural and economic differences exist in its practice, child domestic work has features that distinguish it from other forms of child labour:

- domestic work is among the lowest status, least regulated, and poorest remunerated of all occupations, whether performed by adults or children;
- most child domestics live in, and are under the exclusive, round-the-clock control of the employer (normally the female head of household); they have little freedom or free time;
- about 90% of child domestics are girls; their powerlessness within the household renders them especially vulnerable to sexual abuse;
- since it is possible for very young children to undertake light household tasks, the age of entry can be as young as five;
- many child domestics do not handle their earnings; some are unpaid; the earnings of others are commonly given to parents or people often referred to as 'aunties', but who in reality are unrelated recruitment agents; [1]
- the live-in child domestic is cut off from her or his own family, has little opportunity to make friends, and almost no social exchange with peers.

Socio-economic background

The available research suggests that child domestic workers most commonly come from poor, often large, rural families. However, other factors that determine the likelihood of children becoming domestic workers must also be taken into account, such as orphanhood.

In some South Asian countries, particular religious or ethnic groups regarded as subservient have traditionally supplied others with domestic workers. In India and Nepal, for example, children of low-status groups may be 'bonded' to an employer to work as domestic workers. [1] In countries with minority populations, children from indigenous groups are sent to work as domestic workers in the households of the majority population. This is the case in the Philippines, for example, where young girls from indigenous groups have few other opportunities. [21] It is often also true in Latin American countries, where the child domestic worker's ethnic background might reinforce the employer's attitude of superiority and the child's sense of isolation. [22]

In sub-Saharan Africa, it is similarly common to find that urban child domestic workers come from a particular area or tribal group, often one inhabiting an area subject to out-migration because of population, economic or environmental pressure. [23] Here, as elsewhere, distances between the natal home and the place of work are typically expanding.

Breakdowns in traditional family systems through changing social structures, upheaval or war can increase the possibility of children becoming domestic workers. In Benin [24] and Indonesia, [12] it is clear that changing social structures coupled with rapid commercialization have helped fuel the demand for child domestic workers. In Sri Lanka, the migration of large numbers of women and adolescents as domestic workers (approximately 300,000 to the Middle East alone) [25] has created a demand for younger children to work in their place. Moreover, ethnic conflict has left many children displaced or abandoned and consequently easy prey for 'job placement agents' who pick them up on the streets, in villages or even from within refugee camps, and then sell them into employment. [26] In post-genocide Rwanda, where, 200,000-400,000 children lived in families other than their own in 1997 (the higher estimate counting care by members of the extended family), there was "considerable evidence of fostered children being obliged to work", including in some cases as 'housemaids'. Until the 1994 conflict, child domestic work, common in other African countries, had not been identified as a possibly significant phenomenon in Rwanda. [27]

Age

Most child domestic workers appear to be between 12 and 17 years. It is also known, however, that significant numbers of children in various countries routinely begin working as domestic workers well before they reach adolescence. In Haiti, for example, many children as young as five may be separated from their families to work as *restaveks*, or 'stay-withs'. [28]

In **Bangladesh**, research in Dhaka concluded that more than 20% of child domestics were between 5 and 10 years old. [29] In **Benin**, 72.4% of one sample were between 10 and 14 years, 19.2% below 10 years, and only 8.4% above 14 years of age. [30] In **Ghana**, 80% of girls working as domestics were between 10 and 14 years. [31] In **India**, a survey found that 17% of domestic workers were under 15. [32] In **Togo**, 16% of child domestic workers were found to be 10 or less, 50% under 14, and 65% under 15. [33] In **Uruguay**, 34% of domestic workers surveyed began work before age 14. [34] In **Venezuela**, more than 25% of child domestic workers are said to be less than 10 years. [35]

Gender

The majority of child domestics are girls, with the world's estimates putting the proportion at 90%. [36] Individual country studies tend to confirm this estimate, for example, in the Philippines a 1997 study found that nine out of ten child domestic workers were female. [37] Research carried out in Togo revealed that 95% of child domestic workers were girls. [38] There are, however, strong regional differences. While in Latin America, virtually all child domestic workers tend to be girls, in parts of Asia there are significant numbers of boys. [39] In Bangladesh, for instance, 17% of child domestics surveyed were found to be boys. [40] In Nepal, a study in the Kathmandu Valley discovered that more than half of the child domestic workers were boys. [41]

The predominance of girls reflects a traditional attitude that household chores are 'women's work', but in Togo it is also a strategy to use the girl's income to support the schooling of her brothers. [42] The prevailing view in Nepal is that girls are preferred to boys because they are more silent and submissive and do not run away so often. [43] Social restrictions on girls are also an important factor. In Bangladesh (as elsewhere), girls are 'kept in' for their 'protection', and, apart from work in the garment sector (only open to older girls), they have limited job options outside of the house. [44] Boys instead have far greater mobility. Even the work they do as domestics is likely to be outside the house — tending the garden, looking after the car, or helping in the employer's business. Because of these differences, evidence suggests that young live-in male domestics may feel less isolated than their female counterparts. [45]

Terms of employment

The terms of employment of child domestic workers are a reflection of the social, cultural and economic factors that have put them in

domestic work and hold them there. A universal characteristic of all child domestic work is the child's dependence on the employer. The attitude of the employer largely determines the child's level of vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. The proximity of adults — parents or surrogates — who can protect the child also has a bearing, so the child's distance from home and whether or not he or she has crossed [redacted] are important.[7]

In Indonesia, child domestic workers in provincial towns and cities tended to have much more family contact than those living further from their homes in the capital, Jakarta — thereby reducing the child's vulnerability.[8] In cases where children must travel long distances in the care of recruiters, the trafficked child is dependent on the trafficker for his or her current well-being and future situation.

Children may be recruited informally by siblings or friends already working as domestics, through their extended families, or through an employer's links to other parts of the country. Even family ties, however, can fail to secure the well-being of children recruited in this way. In Benin, where child domestic workers (known as *vidomegon*) often work for distant relatives, a 1998 study has shown that family links do not necessarily ensure that children will be better protected.[9]

How and whether children are paid is also a factor. In Rwanda, a 1997 Ministry of Labour study found that child domestic workers, primarily girls aged 10 to 14, earn the equivalent of $4 a month. They work seven days a week from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., with an entitlement, usually unclaimed, to one family visit per year. Their pay is generally sent home and is often used to pay their siblings' school fees.[10] In Bangladesh, a 1998 survey of child domestics identified only 16% who received their wages in hand; 45% never saw their wages, which were given over to parents or guardians; and about 25% received no wages at all. Employers justified non-payment by the benefits they believed accrued to the children and their families, including, in some cases, a promise to contribute to the girl's wedding expenses. Average earnings for child domestics in Dhaka are Taka 150 per month (roughly $3), or about a sixth of what adult domestics are paid. Interestingly, upper middle class families were found to pay the lowest wages to child domestics.[11] In Kenya, 78% of child domestics in one survey were also only paid 'in kind'.[12] In Haiti, a law has actually been adopted recognizing situations where "a child, in exchange for taking part (on an unpaid basis) in a family's household work, receives his board and lodging, and education and care".[13]

Where employers withhold wages, the child's ties to the household are increased. In Nepal, it is not uncommon for employers to 'look after' the child's wages, promising to convert them into gold or jewellery as a wedding dowry. The child may never see the money.[14] Child domestic workers may also find their wages being docked in lieu of recruitment fees or for travel expenses. This is the case in Indonesia.[15] In Paraguay, where discrimination against indigenous populations is severe despite model laws, it was found that young indigenous domestics were paid either in kind or half as much as other women.[16]

In the severest of cases, children can find themselves bonded to an employer to pay off debts incurred by their parents. This practice has been well documented in India, where a survey found that children from villages are sent by parents to towns and cities to work as domestics, while the wages are paid directly to the parents of the child. They may be kept in bondage until a debt is cleared.[17]

Trafficking in West and Central Africa

The trafficking of child domestic workers — within and across borders — is a fast-growing informal-sector activity in West and Central Africa. In most countries of the region, internal trafficking from rural to urban areas is common. Cross-border trafficking, instead, occurs mainly from Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo to the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and, again, Nigeria, which like Benin is both a country of origin and a receiving country.[18]

Children, whose ages range from 8 to 14, tend to be moved in groups from their rural villages.[19] Reports from Togo have documented the extremely difficult conditions they endure as they then travel, crushed together in lorries or boats, to Gabon and Nigeria.[20] Some children are sent as far as the Middle East and Europe.

Driving the growth of trafficking are a burgeoning number of intermediaries. Professional agents direct the international clandestine networks, but procurement and placement within countries are usually the improvised jobs of illiterate adults. Among these are many former child domestics who have thus found a way to turn to profit the system that once profited from them.[21]

Working conditions

Typically, there are no specified hours or tasks allocated to child domestic workers. They do what their employer asks them to, at any time of day or night.

Both the 24-hour nature of the job and the type of household tasks assigned to child domestic workers have been well documented in existing studies. In Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines, child domestic workers spend on average 15 hours or more working each day, seven days a week, and are generally on-call day and night.[22] Typical tasks include cooking, washing and ironing of clothes for the family, cleaning, shopping, and looking after the employers' children — including escorting them to and from school and carrying their bags.

Child domestic workers spend almost all of their time inside employers' households and, even if they have time off during a day, are commonly not allowed to leave the house. Having friends is often discouraged as this represents a distraction from the child's duties. Due to the distance from home, regular visits are often difficult. In many cases, the only opportunity to return home during the year is at the time of major religious festivals.[23]

Sleeping and eating arrangements typically separate child domestic workers from other members of the household and reinforce their sense of inferiority. In Peru, a young domestic worker reported how she has to eat different, lower-quality, food from her employer. At breakfast, for example, she must serve the family and complete a number of tasks before she is allowed to eat.[24] In Bangladesh, child domestic workers rarely have a place of their own to sleep, and are expected to sleep in any available space, such as the kitchen floor or on the bedroom floor of their employers' children.[25]

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR WORK FOR CHILD DOMESTIC WORKERS

The implications of working as a child domestic depend on many variables, including age and sex, and whether the worker lives in the employer's household or goes there on a daily basis while living at home or with relatives.

Although some implications may also be influenced by the 'contract' agreed between the parents or recruiter and the employer, much more depends on the attitude and behaviour of the employer and her (or his) family. Many studies emphasize that everything that happens to the child domestic worker is "at the whim of the employer". [7] Where the child domestic worker lives in, the employer exerts total control over his or her living and working conditions, health and well-being.

Although the CRC contains no one Article that specifically proscribes child domestic employment as definitively as the 1956 Supplementary Convention on slavery (see Introduction), Article 32 clearly states the right to protection from any work that is harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. The rights the CRC expresses provide a model of childhood, which can be used as a benchmark.

In addition to general rights to development (Article 6), non-discrimination (Article 2) and respect for the child's best interests (Article 3), there are a number of specific rights in the CRC that child domestic workers do not, or may not, enjoy. These rights fall broadly into six categories of rights affecting child domestic workers: independent identity, selfhood, and freedom (Articles 8, 13, 15 and 37), parental nurture and guidance (Articles 7, 8 and 9), physical and psychological well-being (Articles 19, 27), educational development (Articles 28, 32), psycho-social, emotional and spiritual development (Articles 31, 32), protection from exploitation, including sexual exploitation, sale and trafficking (Articles 32, 34, 35).

Respect for identity, selfhood and freedom

The younger the child starts work as a domestic, the greater the risk to her or his sense of identity. In Haiti, the very young children given, or traded, away as *restaveks* often lose permanent contact with their families and do not know their pre-*restavek* identity. [8] In many societies, the loss of identity may extend to the child's being denied the use of her or his given name in favour of a name or a designation selected by the employer. [9]

The acute discrimination suffered by child domestic workers, especially in countries of Latin America and Asia where systems of social (and ethnic) hierarchy are often more in evidence than in Africa, is a constantly reiterated theme of research studies. Many children employed in domestic work have a poor self-image, and dislike their servant status. A survey in Bangladesh found that although child domestics were perceived by other working children as having some advantages (rest periods, work within the house instead of under the sun and in the public eye), on the whole their work was viewed more negatively than that of porters, street workers and factory workers because they are at the mercy of their employers. [10]

Powerlessness and inferior status cause the child loss of self-esteem. The servility typically demanded of the occupation is one of the strongest violations of human rights. A sense of being enslaved is reinforced where the child is not allowed to leave the house. In Asia, this is common, although imposed in the name of the girl's personal security. A study in Lima, Peru, found that one third of young domestic workers never went out. [11] Loss of freedom is the ultimate abuse of human rights.

The rights that are violated

Many rights set out in the CRC are breached or in danger of being breached by domestic work. These include the child's right:

- to be cared for by his or her parents (Article 7);
- to preserve identity, nationality, name and family relations (Article 8);
- to maintain regular contact with parents if separated from them (Article 9);
- to freedom of expression (Article 13);
- to freedom of association (Article 15);
- to be brought up by parents or guardians whose basic concern is his or her best interests (Article 18);
- to protection from physical or mental ill-treatment, neglect or exploitation (Article 19);
- to conditions of living necessary for his or her development (Article 27);
- to education (Article 28);
- to rest, leisure, play and recreation (Article 31);
- to protection from economic exploitation and from performing any work that interferes with his or her education or is harmful to his or her mental, spiritual or social development (Article 32);
- to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Article 34);
- to be protected from abduction, sale or trafficking (Article 35);
- to be protected from torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 37).

What's in a name?

The labels used to describe child domestic workers have proved to be significant in reinforcing their low self-esteem. In Bangladesh, for example, a term used to describe child domestic workers is *bandha* or 'tied down'. [12] In the Dominican Republic, a child domestic is known as a 'closed door' (*puerta cerrada*) servant. [13] In Haiti, they are called *restaveks* from the French 'stay with'. In some Latin American countries, child domestic workers are routinely 'labelled' and stigmatized — as doing work traditionally undertaken by slaves [14] — and may not even be called by their given name. [15]

Many domestic workers, as part of changing public perceptions of their role, seek changes in the way they are described. In the Philippines, the Visayan Forum Foundation encourages use of the term *kasambahay* (assistant to the household). In India, the National Domestic Workers' Movement, formerly 'National Houseworkers' Movement', has changed its name to conform to legal terminology and to identify with national and international campaigns working to promote the rights of domestic workers. [16]

Parental nurture and guidance

Removal from the nurture of the family has equally profound implications for the child

domestic worker, especially when very young. Where parents expect their children to contribute to household work, their needs for love, care and a stable, nurturing environment will be better met in their own home than in one where the purpose of their presence is to serve others. However, research has revealed cases, such as one cited from the Solomon Islands, [11] where child domestic workers describe their hired work burden as lighter than their home burden and their situation as preferable.

Although employers may allow visits from parents or relatives, few can afford to travel or be away from home. Sometimes, as in Bangladesh, oversight of the child is in the hands of an 'auntie' in town, often a domestic worker herself. Her loyalty, however, may be as great to the employer as to the child. The child worker may be allowed a home visit once a year, often at a festival time. [12] Where she is illiterate, no possibility exists in between of maintaining any contact by letter. [13] Links with the family can easily become tenuous. In Haiti, as mentioned earlier, loss of contact can be total. [14]

In cases where children are trafficked across borders for domestic service, it may be years before they see their families. In West Africa, for example, where children from Benin and Togo are taken to Gabon for domestic service, many cases exist of children being unable to return home for between 5 and 10 years. [15]

Physical well-being

The main physical implications of domestic work are less those integral to the tasks undertaken than the long hours most child domestic workers serve. [16] In Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines, child domestic workers often work for 15 hours a day, seven days a week, at times extending to 18 hours. [17] In Zimbabwe, the work day is 10-15 hours long, [18] in Tanzania it can be as long as 16-18 hours, [19] in Morocco, a survey found that 72% of child domestic workers began their day before 7 a.m. and went to bed after 11 p.m. [20] In all studies examining physical well-being, children complain of fatigue, headaches and health problems.

Accidents are also a risk, especially when the child is exhausted. There are hazards associated with cooking, boiling water, chopping vegetables, using chemical cleaning fluids and carrying heavy items. Burns have been found to be relatively common among child domestic workers compared with other child workers. [21] In case of breakage or poor performance, the worker may be punished severely. Accusations of laziness or bad work are often behind violent incidents against domestic workers. Injury or sickness suffered by the domestic worker may not be treated with the same urgency or medical attention as with a family member. [22]

Domestic workers often eat leftover portions of food for their meals. However, malnutrition is not commonly reported as a problem. In fact, the employer's home may provide more food and a nutritionally better diet than a poverty-stricken parental home, even where the food is inferior to that eaten by the employer's family.

Some physical problems are triggered by mental and psychological distress. A health worker at the Maurice Sixto Shelter for child domestic workers in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, for instance, reported that 80% of the children she sees suffer upset stomach and headache from emotional distress. [23]

Finally, the possibility of sexual abuse or exploitation presents risks of sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV) and early pregnancy. Pregnancy often leads to dismissal and in some countries rejection by the young girl's own family.

Children serving children

A survey carried out of 80 full-time live-in servants (71 girls and 9 boys) in Bangladesh [13] found that the way the child domestic is treated generally has repercussions on the other children in the household. The young 'masters' or 'mistresses', even when far younger, often give orders to the domestic workers looking after them. This practice contrasts with the deference age usually commands in their society and reinforces the wealthier children's sense of superiority and entitlement to privilege. Violent punishment inflicted on child domestic workers can be very distressing to the other children in the household: some have even stated when interviewed that they felt that it was wrong for their parents to slap or strike child domestics. [14] On the other hand, cases have been reported of children, imitating their mothers, beating the child domestics themselves. The employer's children also learn to regard as normal such serious abuses of children's rights as the denial of education, leisure and contact with one's own family. One eight-year-old domestic worker neatly sums up the inequity governing the relationship she has with the other household children: "When I play with the master's children, I must always let them win." [15]

Educational development

Few children in domestic service attend school. Where the age of entry is lower than primary school completion, lack of education is one of the major losses. It is a loss that many child domestic workers, including those in Kenya and Togo, feel keenly. [24]

In Peru, 'godmothers' in urban areas purposely keep young domestics, generally of Andean origin, out of school so that they will not be 'spoiled' by contact with other girls in their situation. "Basically, the idea is to keep the girl unaware of her rights and alternative opportunities." [25] Similarly, in Bangladesh, employers admitted fearing that contact with others could lead to the child domestic finding better employment elsewhere. [26] Even in countries where child domestic workers of school age are permitted to attend class part time, they have to fit their studies around their duties, the demands of the household take precedence. Thus they may be too tired and have too little time for homework to keep up. [27]

Lack of schooling not only reduces skills and knowledge, but limits personal development. The substitution of a 'domestic apprenticeship' for a proper education prepares a girl exclusively for marriage, childbearing, and further domestic work in her own home and those of others. Without the knowledge, broader horizons and experience of social interchange imparted by school-going, her sense of identity will remain imprisoned in her servant persona. In India, a common perception is that "if you can read and write you do not need to do this kind of work", [28] the reverse side of the coin is that if you cannot, a life of servility is all you are fit for.

Studies from Indonesia and elsewhere show that young domestic workers are very pessimistic about their future because of their lack of education. Some even have difficulty thinking about the future beyond tomorrow. [29]

Psycho-social and emotional development

The daily experience of discrimination and the isolation endured by child domestics in the employer's household have been reported as the most difficult part of their burden. [30] Even if they have affective relations with members of the household, these are not on equal terms. The capacity to resist sexual advances or negotiate fair treatment will be non-existent, emotionally as well as practically. There will be little or no experience of expressing desires and opinions with a right to respect for them. Children of the employer are also affected by the way young domestic workers are treated,

learning to disregard the dignity and rights of others as part of their nurture.

Recreation and play may be non-existent, except when minding the employer's own children. The only experience may be to watch television, under carefully prescribed circumstances. Many children are reported to fantasize and develop a distorted view of the world. [14]

Confinement to the house leaves them with no opportunity to make friends or enjoy interaction with peers who share their cultural background and language. [15] A 1987 study [16] to collect quantitative health data using psychological tests and control groups, conducted in Kenya, found that child domestic workers experienced significantly more psychological problems than other children (working and non-working). Bedwetting, insomnia, withdrawal, regressive behaviour, premature ageing, depression and phobic reactions to their employers were common. Depression has also been reported in Bangladesh [17] and in various Latin American countries. [18]

Gross abuse and exploitation, including sexual exploitation

The degree of protection a child domestic worker enjoys from all forms of exploitation depends on the employer. If the child is unpaid, overworked, or treated violently, there is no means of redress other than to leave. This will be a frightening prospect unless the child is able to arrange to go to another position.

Several studies show that, in Latin America, many men who grow up in homes with domestic workers have their first sexual encounter with a domestic worker. In Lima, Peru, one study estimated the proportion at 60% [19] Whether there is an assumption that sexual availability is an unspoken part of a domestic worker's contract varies from culture to culture. In the view of one international NGO, the media's stereotypic portrayal of domestic workers as promiscuous is an important factor in their widespread sexual abuse in Latin America.[20] In Fiji, 8 out of 10 domestic workers reported that their employers sexually abuse them. [21] In Bangladesh, girl domestic workers may be returned home or married off at puberty. A study of 71 domestics in Bangladesh found that 25% of the girls interviewed (average age: 11) considered that they had been sexually abused, and seven had been raped. [22] Often families reject these 'spoiled girls' because their behaviour has brought dishonour to the family. In these instances, domestic work typically becomes a precursor for prostitution, as the young girls have few other options available. [23]

In one small-scale study in Calcutta, India, the majority of interviewees said they had experienced physical or psychological brutality. [24] In the Philippines, co-worker violence is also reported, including sexual harassment from male co-workers. [25] Quantifying the brutality endured by child domestics is difficult, as few will be bold enough to say anything about it except to a trusted confidante. Cases in which domestic workers suffer gross abuse and violence are occasionally reported in the press. NGO newsletters document a steady stream of individual cases of severe abuse perpetrated against both girl and boy domestic workers. [26]

In South Asia, violence often takes the form of attack by a hot iron. In Sri Lanka, lawyers have spoken openly about the extreme violence used against child domestic workers, and in the Juvenile Court in Colombo cases have revealed brutality by employers towards their child domestic workers including branding, dousing in boiling water, rubbing chilli powder on the mouth, beatings and stabbings. [27] Deaths caused by starvation, burning and forcing excessive intake of salt have also been reported. [28]

Brutality has no socio-economic boundaries. In Benin, for instance, the wife of a former Minister was tried and sentenced to a prison term in 1996 for beating to death a child she employed under the *vidomegon* system. [29] ❑

CHALLENGES FOR PRACTITIONERS: PROJECT RESPONSES

Interventions on behalf of child domestic workers are still in their infancy, and there are still comparatively few projects that have been designed with child domestic workers solely in mind. Many of the projects currently providing services for them were originally meant to serve the needs of other, more visible, groups of exploited children such as street children, and have been adapted in response to need. As is the case in all responses to child labour, one of the greatest challenges facing practitioners is to take small NGO initiatives to scale.

Most project responses work on two basic premises: first, that the relationship between the child domestic worker and the family she or he works for must be recognized as an employment relationship, and second, that there is a 'bottom line' below which children should not be employed as domestic workers, whether this is due to their age or because they are in an abusive situation.

The nature of the projects incorporating these two basic premises varies. Some NGOs have developed innovative protective and preventive approaches to different aspects of the child domestic worker's situation, depending on the local setting, the most conspicuous needs, and the organization's own expertise. Some NGOs — such as Shoishab Bangladesh and Visayan Forum in the Philippines — address many aspects in tandem.

Practitioner responses can be grouped in the following categories:

- drop-in centres;
- crisis intervention;
- educational programmes – including access to formal and non-formal education and skills training;
- social life, recreation and counselling.

Drop-in centres

Not only do drop-in centres provide a home-away-from-home for child domestic workers, they may also act as the venue for most other kinds of services. Such centres often consist simply of a rented room or space in the offices of an NGO. This provides the physical and emotional space away from employers to relax, meet with others like themselves, receive free medical or legal advice or counselling, and engage in educational activities. The centre often provides the opportunity to develop deeper relationships between carers and initially distrustful or nervous child workers and guide them along a new path. It can also operate as a place of help and safety in a crisis.

WAO-Afrique in Lomé, Togo, is an example of an organization providing a specific drop-in centre for groups of former child domestic workers, teaching them the necessary skills to start their own food-selling businesses. Others were originally set up for street children, but expanded to work with 'housegirls' in response to concern about their situation. This is the case of Kuleana, a Tanzanian NGO.

Drop-in centres need local-level advocacy work to let child workers, employers, parents and the local community know of their existence. As in the case of the Maurice Sixto Shelter in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, they need the cooperation of employers to be of use, or their domestic workers will be forbidden to go to them. Projects often need to invest a good deal of effort to gain the support of employers by appealing to their self-perception of being a caring employer, or by providing skills training for child domestic workers that in the short term might benefit the employers' family.

Maurice Sixto Shelter

The Maurice Sixto Shelter in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, provides support to 300 child domestic workers, addressing many of their problems. The Shelter's influence in the community is assured by their close connection with the Catholic Church, and it tries to gain the cooperation of employers and bring them into a dialogue.

Employers' consent is sought to allow the children to have as much contact with their natural families as possible and to permit them to attend non-formal education classes in the afternoons. The children not only learn basic education and vocational skills but also have the opportunity to rediscover their childhood, developing their confidence and personal talents by engaging in sports and recreation. The Centre also encourages employers to improve the way they treat their child domestic workers.

Crisis intervention

Some of the most innovative programmes have developed in response to the need to protect child domestic workers from physical and sexual assault. Usually located in drop-in centres, such intervention takes the form of emergency medical and legal provision and counselling services.

Sri Lanka provides a successful example of crisis intervention. In 1992, the Department of Probation and Child Care launched a national publicity campaign against the exploitation of child domestic workers. As part of the campaign, a national telephone 'hotline' was introduced to allow concerned members of the public and children themselves to report cases of abuse. Before the end of the campaign in 1993, hundreds of calls were received and investigated, resulting in a number of prosecutions.

Often 24-hour crisis lines are an effective tool for reaching child domestic workers. Access to telephones is, however, by no means universal, and tends to work more in favour of older children.

Educational programmes

The vast majority of live-in child domestic workers do not attend school. Those still below the age of primary completion may have left school early to go to work. Some, especially in very poor countries such as Haiti or Bangladesh, may never have been to school at all. Educational disadvantage is therefore a focus of many projects. Services aim not only to equip child workers with basic knowledge and practical skills, but also to ensure that they have contact with the outside world, and gain in confidence and self-esteem.

The most common form of education programme is training in basic literacy and numeracy. A typical example is a non-formal programme for child domestic workers 6-14 years of age run by the Working Women Association of Pakistan, a similar programme is run in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in a main market on Friday when it is closed. For older girls, skills training may be offered in occupations from cookery to secretarial courses, as is illustrated by the Nairobi-based project, SINAGA.

In another Kenyan project, in Kisumu, the Municipal Council has made classroom space and teachers' time available for evening continuation classes. In 1992, 108 working girls, largely child domestic workers, attended courses from 5 to 6.30 p.m. Despite their determination, few girls completed primary school, mainly because they were studying after a full working day, which began as early as 4 a.m. and often continued after the girls' return from school in the evening. Today, given demand, classes for 'house helpers' are held in five primary schools. Students must pay a user fee, which helps cover the additional remuneration paid to teachers.

In cases where young children are removed from employment, project practitioners may seek to enter or re-enter them into mainstream schooling by negotiating with parents and the school authorities. This was the case in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro State, where officials from the Municipal Child Foundation of Campos dos Goitacazes, with ILO/IPEC collaboration, managed to withdraw 50 girls, 8-13 years of age, from domestic service, and provide them with a subsidy and access to formal education and training. Key to the success of this project was the authorities' persuasion of employers to release the children.

Once in school, the child often needs ongoing support, in the form of homework classes and liaison with teachers and parents.

SINAGA, Kenya

Based in Nairobi and funded by ILO/IPEC, the SINAGA Women and Child Labour Resource Centre provides basic education in the form of training courses in cookery, tailoring and typing, as well as emotional support and a crisis hotline for girl domestic workers. The course, for which there is no charge, lasts six months. The 'time off' required for attendance from the child domestic's work is negotiated with their employers by the staff at the Centre.

Although SINAGA also serves as a place of refuge for the girls, the fundamental aim of the Centre is to equip them for the future. If they become pregnant, or are let go by their employers because they have become adults and require higher pay, they need resources of skill and self-confidence to deal with life. SINAGA also aims in the future to provide counselling and legal advice for those who suffer violence and abuse in the household. It has had 500 'graduates' to date.

Social life, recreation and counselling

All children, young and old, need to relax, play and meet with others. Given the isolation, discrimination and chronic lack of self-confidence experienced by many child domestic workers, this is a very strongly felt need.

SUMAPI, a small Filipino organization for domestic workers, runs a number of recreational activities for child domestic workers every Sunday in a local park. Word has spread, and new child domestic workers arrive each week to relax, talk and share problems. The activities also have a serious side, with organizers using the time to provide information about basic rights, and keeping track of absent children through the informal network.

ENDA, a Senegalese NGO, has managed to draw together child domestic workers from all over West Africa to share their experiences and to push for improved working conditions. Children are encouraged to express themselves in a variety of ways, including in drawings and paintings. Group solidarity has been fostered by using focus groups to bring children together with their peers to discuss problems. Many have also become members of a regional movement campaigning on

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behalf of the rights of young workers, an important example of the empowerment of children to participate in processes meant to bring about the realization of their own rights.

Counselling — among employers as well as with the workers themselves — can also make a significant difference. In India, the National Domestic Workers' Movement aims to improve conditions for both child and adult domestic workers by emphasizing the dignity of domestic work and raising its status within the employer's household. The Movement organizes activities every Sunday where young domestic workers can meet and share experiences, and it also issues them identity cards to enhance their sense of collective solidarity. [7] Outreach and counselling are also major components of the work of the Visayan Forum Foundation in the Philippines. ❑

The Visayan Forum Foundation, Philippines

The Visayan Forum Foundation has a range of projects and services aimed at relieving the plight of child domestic workers in the Philippines. The earliest and one of the most successful of its ventures has been the Luneta Park outreach programme. By going out into the Park to talk to young female domestic workers taking a stroll in their free time, the NGO was able to reach normally 'invisible' child workers. They offered counselling and support in the Park, and helped them to meet other domestic workers, especially those in the same ethnic group.

The full range of Visayan Forum's services include:

- a telephone 'hotline' and round-the-clock venue where child domestic workers can come for emergency aid, counselling or just 'time out';
- collection of textbooks and reference materials for use by child domestic workers in obtaining documents such as birth certificates and in schoolwork;
- publication of a newsletter for domestic workers — *Balitang Kasambahay* (Kasambahay News);
- support of alternative formal education centres and children's rights groups offering legal advice to child domestic workers; and
- self-help groups with older child domestic workers trained as leaders to support younger children, maintain and update databases and provide counselling and advice.

CHALLENGES FOR PRACTITIONERS: RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

A certain amount of research is needed for any type of intervention on behalf of child domestic workers, whether programmatic or advocacy. In the case of advocacy to the public, thorough research is an essential preliminary to any awareness-raising campaign. Where the employment of child domestic workers is not regarded as harmful, convincing evidence of damage to childhood will be needed for a campaign to be persuasive.

Raising awareness

Compared with a few years ago, there is more awareness, both in the relevant countries and regions, and internationally, of the situation of child domestic workers. [8] This is a product of growing concern about child labour generally and about the situation of girls in particular. It is also the result of research studies undertaken by NGOs and others. In many settings, however, awareness-raising has barely begun, and even in those where it is more advanced, there is a long way to go before it is effectively translated into better lives for young domestic workers.

Awareness-raising depends on gathering data and disseminating it. The main obstacle to collecting data about child domestic workers is their statistical 'invisibility'. The reasons for this have already been explored. There is another type of 'invisibility' governing the situation of child domestic workers: attitudinal invisibility. [9] In societies where it is normal to hire a young girl to help around the house, the practice commands such social acceptance that it takes a leap of imagination among researchers, social scientists, social workers and NGOs to think in terms of enquiring into it. All parties — employers, parents, employees and potential researchers — may see the employment of an adolescent domestic worker as beneficial. All parties would probably equally deplore abusive treatment of a domestic worker by others.

Thus, domestic employment is unlike prostitution or work in a sweatshop or factory, where the adults responsible for child exploitation are a small and easily identifiable reprobate group outside the mainstream of society. Focusing on 'shock' or 'horror' stories and demonizing employers of child domestic workers does not address attitudinal invisibility. Where child employees are above the legal employment age, and even where they are above age 12, outright condemnation of the practice by those with different value systems may be resented as ignorant and culturally biased. Thus the awareness-raising process must be sensitively handled, and must be based on sound research.

Gathering information

Studies undertaken in the past few years have enabled practitioners to develop a profile of the child domestic workforce in various urban communities. However, information is still very incomplete. There is very little information on prevalence or trends, and most assessments of the impacts of their working lives on child domestic workers are speculative.

Prevention through awareness-raising

Trade unions for domestic workers in Kenya and Tanzania have concluded that "prevention through awareness-raising is the single most effective method in combating child labour in private homes". Working with these unions as part of its "Integrated programme for building partnerships and capacity against child labour", ILO/IPEC is developing a handbook on prevention, removal and rehabilitation, based on the experience of the unions and IPEC. It subsequently plans to create a training module, including the handbook and a methodology for awareness-raising, targeting people who employ children in their homes. The long-term objective of the project is to launch an international awareness-raising campaign directed at white-collar workers, teachers and employers. Called START AT HOME, this campaign would incorporate not only the newly developed handbook on prevention, but also a handbook for research and action (see box p. 11) reflecting NGO experience in this field. [10]

The particular difficulties of undertaking research and the lack of information generally has prompted Anti-Slavery International and ILO/IPEC to develop a handbook for researchers into child domestic work.[5] One of the key conclusions of this handbook is that, while it may be possible to collect basic data about the practice (age, sex, family background, level of education, tasks) from house-to-house surveys, it is not possible to collect in-depth qualitative data in this way from the children themselves, nor is it desirable to try to do so.

An important factor inhibiting the gathering of information about child domestic workers is that, since they work in private homes, access is difficult. Where it has been possible to gain cooperation of employers and access to the children, almost all information is from, or filtered by, the employers. Researchers find it difficult to conduct meaningful interviews with child domestic workers in their presence.[6] The children tend to say very little. Younger children especially, given their menial role and experience of life, have almost no capacity for self-expression. In the presence of the employer, the child is doubly inhibited and may be fearful. Certainly, no child will describe to strangers episodes of violence or sexual abuse. It takes a great deal of time and confidence-building, by necessity in a place outside the employer's household, before they can do such a thing.

The recommended way to collect information from child workers themselves is to do so within the context of an existing drop-in centre or educational programme in which they participate, or develop a programme for them with research as an integrated purpose. Interviewing children in depth is best done over a period of time in a relatively unstructured and informal way. Examples exist in Bangladesh, Haiti and the Philippines of programmes where interventions and research have been handled in tandem by teachers trained to use the classroom as an environment for encouraging written, drawn and spoken self-expression.[7]

Focus group discussion has also been successfully used in Senegal[8] as a means of eliciting information from adolescent domestic workers, and prompting a discussion among them. Groups of young girls were invited to attend semi-structured 'tea debates' in the community with their 'aunties' or informal guardians and some older domestic workers. Here, it was found that until they were separated into their own group, the girls would not speak up in front of their elders. In a position of peer solidarity, they spoke freely about their problems, including sexual exploitation.

In-depth research work with children, especially with those whose situation makes them extra-vulnerable, cannot be conducted by strangers in a cursory manner or the findings will be useless. Experience in Bangladesh also shows that interviews can lead to distress among child workers, who may run away from their employer or seek help. Thus, researchers must be in a position to provide support should it be sought.[9]

Research: the basis of action

Anti-Slavery International, with support from ILO/IPEC, has produced a practical 'how to' guide entitled *Child Domestic Workers: A handbook for research and action*, which is an important tool for researchers and children's rights advocates active in this field. It draws on the experiences and views of NGOs and others working with child domestics in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The handbook's step-by-step approach focuses on solutions to practical problems such as 'where to start?', 'how do we find out what we need to know?', 'how to collect the information needed?', and 'translating the research findings into action'.

Copies of the handbook are available in English, French and Spanish from Anti-Slavery International (*see* Links section of this *Digest* for contact details).

Changing attitudes: advocacy at national and international levels

Child domestic work is an issue that touches on people's private and family lives, local economic realities, customs and socio-cultural values. To point out the damage it can do to children requires holding up a mirror to the society and asking people to inspect their attitudes to many things, including social hierarchy and childhood. Advocacy is most effective when local actors take the leading role.

The primary roles of advocacy campaigns should be to break down attitudinal invisibility towards the practice, and reduce instances of abuse and exploitation. This is likely to include the condemnation of employment of children under the age of completion of basic education, a clear differentiation between adoption and employment, promotion of decent pay and conditions, and encouragement to employers to give time off for young domestic workers to attend school, meet peers and mix with the wider society.[10]

One example of an advocacy campaign at the local level is the one undertaken by the NGO Shoishab Bangladesh. Another example is provided by the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), a group of Tanzanian women journalists and lawyers concerned about the increasing number of girls being brought into urban areas as domestic workers. After interviewing more than 4,000 girls in several cities, this group launched a multimedia awareness campaign, involving radio broadcasts, distribution of pamphlets and cartoon booklets, a

Shoishab Bangladesh

In tackling the complex web of social and economic issues involved in child domestic work, Shoishab Bangladesh has developed an approach that combines action, research and advocacy.

Shoishab started work with child domestics in the early 1990s, providing educational services, a drop-in centre, and crisis intervention, if required. From the outset, it recognized that the employers must be involved: given their control over the child domestics in their charge, their cooperation was essential for its work to be a success. As one tactic to encourage employers to allow children to attend classes, Shoishab has stressed the importance of having a literate domestic in the household, one who can take messages, make emergency calls and read labels. It has even persuaded some employers to volunteer space in their homes for the classes.[11]

Advocacy of the child domestic's plight has been central to Shoishab's work, and it has worked especially hard to help employers understand the part they play in the exploitation of a child in their care. Its messages are aimed not only at employers, but also at key actors in the local community, adult domestic workers and parents. Shoishab has produced posters and a publication, *Child domestic workers — Is servitude the only option?* It believes that, as the child domestic develops self-confidence and a sense of himself or herself, the employer may react negatively towards the child unless 'brought along'.

Shoishab has demonstrated that changes in social and employer attitudes towards the treatment of child domestics can be set in motion.

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video and a play for community theatre. A series of village-based seminars aimed at parents and community leaders helped to expose the difficulties that child domestic workers faced. [10]

In Sri Lanka, local television stations and newspapers ran advertisements in one campaign, which resulted in many influential people deciding not to employ children as domestic workers in their homes any longer. Advocacy efforts also targeted parents, since as one observer noted, "Parents give their children to affluent families out of ignorance. The problem ha(s) existed for generations and constitute(s) a vicious circle which must be broken." [11]

In Morocco, the newly designated Department of Family and Child Welfare has launched a national campaign on violence against women, with an emphasis on child domestic workers. The Department produced two television spots, one with UNICEF support, which were broadcast nationally. Abuses against child domestic workers are also regularly reported on the radio in an attempt to focus public attention on the critical situation of these young workers. [12]

Advocacy at the international level should be based on local and national-level activity and be used primarily as a vehicle for spreading to an international audience the findings of local research studies and activities. The CRC can be used in advocacy to underline the difference between the vision of childhood agreed internationally, and the infringement of childhood rights experienced by child domestic workers.

Care should be taken by international bodies, whether NGOs or intergovernmental, not to adopt public positions regarding child domestic work informed primarily by the most sensational cases of abuse and deprivation of rights, this is a tendency in their literature. This is unlikely to persuade the societies involved to change their attitudes or practices, and may provoke antagonism. All advocacy activity at the international level should take account of local sensitivities and realities concerning the practice.

International organizations with field offices in countries where child domestic work is prevalent, especially United Nations or other human rights organizations, should ensure that the advocacy stands they take are consistent with the practice of their staff. UNICEF has issued a directive to its staff worldwide not to employ children under 15 as domestic workers. If they employ domestic workers aged 15-18, staff should ensure that their health, safety and morals are fully protected, and that these young workers have clearly defined duties, reasonable wages, a work week that does not exceed 40 hours, and time off for education and vocational training. [13] The staff associations of the UNICEF Sri Lanka and Maldives offices have taken the directive one step further by signing an agreement to adhere to its provisions and by involving the local ILO offices in the initiative as well. [14]

❑

Is regulation possible?

The difficulties of operating any system of regulation of child domestic work are those integral to any type of informal labour, with the compounding factor that the place of employment is the private home. The use of law as a means of regulation and protection is even more problematic in countries where child domestic workers are not seen as paid workers but as helpers around the house. However, the law can be used to prosecute people guilty of violence and gross abuse of children, including child domestic workers

National legislation

It is not surprising to find that few countries have legislation to protect child domestic workers, except in cases where physical or sexual violence against the child can be proven. [15] Even in [redacted] where effective labour regulatory systems do exist, much domestic employment is informal and remains outside the reach of the authorities generally, often rendering the law powerless to protect the children involved. In developing countries, existing laws are rarely implemented, and in the few instances where laws are invoked, child domestic workers can even end up being treated as offenders. [16] [17]

One of the key reasons for this situation is that, to date, national laws have, by and large, sought to abolish child domestic work by imposing laws and standards on societies where the practice is culturally sanctioned and the political will to implement such laws is weak. Moreover, "access to the law for the very poor is problematic, not the least for the complexity of the processes, the duration of time civil litigation takes and the ability of those with access to money, power and knowledge to influence the course of events, usually to the detriment of the poor". [18]

Groups working with child domestics have suggested that child labour laws in themselves will not stop the use of children as domestic workers. Some policy makers see the promotion by law of compulsory primary education as a more useful preventative method to bring about the reduction of all forms of child labour, including child domestic work. The Agenda for Action adopted by the Oslo Conference on Child Labour, held in October 1997, for instance, recognizes that "education, particularly basic education, is one of the principal means of preventing and eliminating child labour". It urges Governments to establish "a system of accessible, relevant, high-quality, universal, compulsory basic education that is free for all". [19] ILO and UNICEF have also strongly promoted the extension and improvement of schooling as "the single most effective way to stem the flow of school-age children into abusive forms of employment or work". [20]

National legislation in industrialized countries

Legislation regulating child domestic work exists in a number of industrialized countries, as evidenced in their initial reports to the CRC monitoring body, the Committee on the Rights of the Child:

- In **Denmark**, children between the ages of 10 and 15 may, to a certain extent, perform light paid work, including light cleaning.
- In **Austria**, children over 12 may perform light and occasional work, but only for a maximum of two hours per day, and provided that school lessons and employment combined do not exceed seven hours per day.
- In **Italy**, children may be employed as domestic workers at age 14, provided the work does not interfere with school obligations and does not involve night work or work during holidays.
- In **Sweden**, no rules set a minimum age for domestic work. The Domestic Employment Act, however, specifies that the working hours of minors must not be as long as those of adults, and the employers must ensure that minors are not engaged in dangerous work.
- In **France**, it is legal to employ children as domestic workers even when they have not completed compulsory schooling, legislation that the Committee on the Rights of the Child has urged the Government to reconsider. [21]

Certainly the entrenchment of the idea of universal basic education as a social norm would help persuade employers to allow young domestic workers time off to attend school and, over time, help end the practice. Also needed in many developing countries are effective systems for recording births. According to UNICEF, the births of about 40 million children every year go unregistered [24]. Laws setting minimum ages for employment and school leaving can obviously not be applied when the age of the child is debatable.

At present, many children's rights advocates believe that the first step is to persuade employers to begin to observe some basic standards, such as allowing children regular time off to attend school. Only when employers have accepted these locally agreed standards do national and international laws become relevant in solidifying locally accepted norms [4].

Crucial to the acceptance of standards for the protection of child domestic workers is that employers recognize domestic work as a form of employment, and the child domestics in their households as workers and not children of poor parents whom they are 'helping out' [25]. Regularizing the status of child domestics as workers has two essential components. In addition to introducing certain conditions — limits on working hours, regular time off, family contact, adequate remuneration, health care and access to education — there should be prohibitions on the employment of children under a certain age, in certain conditions (such as debt bondage), and protection from physical and sexual abuse [26].

A good example of what can be achieved through grass-roots action with employers is in Mumbai, India. The National Domestic Workers' Movement, representing adult as well as child domestic workers, is campaigning to gain recognition of domestic workers as workers under the Indian Legal System. It has convinced employers to allow workers one day a week off and a month of paid holiday a year, and it has also established minimum wage levels for the first time. In addition, the Movement is urging both the national government and state governments to adopt laws fixing the minimum age for entry into domestic work at 14 years [27].

International standards

If regulation is difficult at the national level, it is even harder to devise systems of international regulation of child domestic work that will be effective. However, attention to the potential or actual exploitation of child domestic labour at an international level through the establishment of standards helps influence national debate, the implementation of existing laws, and the changing of attitudes.

Internationally, there are a host of standards directly or indirectly applicable to child domestic workers. In addition to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and its precursor, the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, these include: the United Nations Conventions against slavery (1926 and 1956), the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. There are also a number of ILO standards that have been used, or interpreted, to cover the exploitation of child domestic workers, including Convention No. 138 Concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973), and ILO's Convention No. 29 Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour, 1930. (See back page for some relevant provisions of the above legislation.) A new [illegible] on child labour is currently being prepared.

However, for the reasons already explored, most of these standards are not invoked to protect child domestic workers. The 1956 Supplementary Convention on Slavery, the only instrument with a specific provision to protect children from being given or traded into domestic service, has never been invoked by national authorities, despite ratification by over 100 States [4]. Since 1930, the ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, which monitors the implementation of ILO standards, has commented on a wide variety of practices relating to child domestic workers.

It is clear, therefore, that child domestic work remains a difficult issue for international human rights and labour standards to tackle. It has also been suggested that many of these standards have been set unrealistically high to be achievable at national level (in the case of the 1956 Supplementary Convention on Slavery, the standard is 18 years). This has ensured that, in practice, all children working as domestics, including the youngest and most vulnerable, remain unprotected [4].

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has helped pursue child labour issues in its dialogue with States Parties. In its Concluding Observations, it has explicitly mentioned child domestic workers as requiring attention on more than 20 occasions, in most cases highlighting national legal reform as the primary need. It has also frequently commented on the lack of enforcement and, in the case of Bangladesh, "failure to implement existing legislation at all levels, from law enforcement agencies to the judiciary". [28] In a landmark observation on the initial report of Sri Lanka in 1995, the Committee urged the State party to "give due attention to domestic child workers and encourage, through the promotion and implementation of the Convention, a change of mentality and attitudes". [29] This sent an important signal to the Sri Lankan authorities, reinforcing the efforts of local NGOs as well as those of UNICEF and ILO.

Although national laws and international conventions appear to have limited effect in a regulatory sense, they can have an effect on the process of debate and on attitudes. Their existence can help to drive the process of social change to ensure greater awareness of, and subsequently greater protection for, the situation of child domestic workers. Indeed, it is clear that international standards have already been important in challenging prevailing attitudes, and as an advocacy tool in bringing to light this neglected form of child labour. [30]

❑

New ILO standard on child labour

Preparation is under way of a new ILO standard on the 'worst forms' of child labour. The new standard, scheduled for final discussion at ILO's annual International Labour Conference in June 1999, is likely to consist of a Convention that is legally binding on States that ratify it, and a non-binding Recommendation containing guidelines on implementation.

The new Convention currently proposes to prohibit four categories of child labour: slavery and similar practices, including sale and trafficking of children; the commercial sexual exploitation of children; hazardous work jeopardizing a child's health, safety and morals; and involvement in other illegal activities such as drug trafficking. The Recommendation suggests that all categories except hazardous work should be classified as criminal offences.

While child domestic work is not mentioned explicitly, the new Convention invites ratifying States to take "effective and time-bound measures to reach out to children at special risk and to take account of the special situation of girls". In addition, the Recommendation requires that attention be given to the "problem of hidden work situations in which girls are at special risk". In defining hazardous work, consideration should be given to "work ... for long hours, during the night or without the possibility of returning home each day". However, despite these guidelines, neither the Convention nor the Recommendation is explicit about the circumstances in which children should, or should not, work as domestics.

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

by Augustine Black and Jonathan Blagbrough, Anti-Slavery International

The realization that child domestic work is probably the most widespread and at the same time the most neglected form of child employment is a challenge to child labour activists. The additional realization that this kind of work is overwhelmingly performed by girls and that their occupational vulnerability potentially exposes them to violence and sexual abuse adds fuel to the activists fire.

But as this [illegible] makes clear great care must be taken in considering what to do on child domestics behalf if effective action rather than the provoking of symbolic controversy is the intention. Why? Because nothing can be done to improve the situation of child domestic workers unless those responsible for employing them are involved. And stirring up anger against employers of child domestics — many of whom are pillars of society — is not likely to enlist their cooperation.

The first thing to establish is what the key issues are. Child domestic work defies simple categorization. For some it is exploitative work; the child domestic is under the exclusive control of adults who are not her parents, her daily round serves their interests not her own and she is separated from her family for [illegible]. For others it is a [illegible] for the child to learn skills and to earn money for [illegible]. Some children are [illegible] and socialized as servants and exploited at a very young age is against any code of rights or ethics and is deeply distressing. In these cases the issues of servitude and take adoption are pertinent. Child development and protection issues are also significant since denial of schooling, play and recreation will seriously damage childhood. But the threat of sexual abuse and exploitation is undoubtedly less among younger children. Once the child domestic reaches puberty this risk grows. At the same time other issues may become somewhat less significant. Many children in the relevant societies leave school at around 12 and start to look for earning opportunities. At their mid-teens employment is legal and there may well be some element of choice in the child domestic worker's situation.

Yet to have any of these issues recognized at all is an uphill battle in societies where children are widely employed as domestic workers. Most of their employers think they are doing the children a favour. Even very young children — and their employers — favour it if they escape what they and others perceive as the drudgery of [illegible] and the teaching them [illegible] clean, mind the baby, [illegible] and perhaps with [illegible] a better prospect of marriage [illegible].

[illegible] employers [illegible] must [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

and necessitate immediate and systematic action. Childrens rights and child labour activists — including Anti-Slavery International (ASI) — strongly support this view. The employment of children below the age of 12 or before the legally accepted minimum working age is unacceptable. So are situations where children work in conditions akin to slavery: are bonded or trafficked. And all forms of gross abuse, neglect, torture, violence or sexual abuse against child domestics is unacceptable and where they occur, active prosecution of abusers must take place and be seen to have taken place and severely punished.

For child domestic workers above the minimum age, advocacy must focus on improvements in their terms and conditions of work. This requires active efforts to persuade employers to review their whole attitude to the employment of young domestics and their employment practices. Unlimited working hours, lack of remuneration, isolation from family and peers, lack of opportunities for schooling and training, and recreation have to be seen to be against the interests of the employer. Even children still suffering other forms of exploitation, all these are violations of childrens rights, but they will not be seen as such by an employer who does not accept that the child domestic is a worker or employee — not simply a child from a poor family she is helping to care.

A fundamental shift of attitude is needed from the concept of work as helping out in return for keep, to the concept of work as employment. That a job is involved which should be subject to such notions as working hours and days off should be an important part of advocacy. This will not be easy. Arrangements about duties and responsibilities between people living in the same household, whether they are members of the same family or not, have always been subject to private agreement, heavily influenced by social and family custom. Even where laws and regulations concerning domestic employment are supposed to operate, as in industrialized countries, informal arrangements still often prevail. So the attitude and behaviour of employers towards their servants will continue to govern the vast majority of their working situations for the foreseeable future.

Awareness building is nonetheless possible. Anyone who thinks about it for a moment will see that domestic workers, young and old, make an important contribution to the functioning of their employers household. Recognizing that is a small step away from recognizing their working status, even if this is a conceptual rather than a legal recognition. While few countries have legislation specifically to protect people, adult and child, living and working in the households of others, most do set widely known minimum standards for the treatment of workers, especially child workers, relating to working hours, pay and time off. The implementation of these standards would radically improve the situation of millions of child domestics.

However, this change in attitude will have to be achieved by persuasion, social pressure, and the setting of examples by those in positions of influence. Enforcing legislation on a household by household basis is impracticable in the societies in question. The only way to ensure that individual child domestic workers are being afforded the protection they need is by ensuring that employers value childrens rights and child protection norms for every child, and accept the importance of setting basic standards for the employment of all domestics, especially younger domestics, in their households.

An example of what can be achieved with employers can be seen in the pioneering work of NGOs such as Shoishab Bangladesh (see box p. 11) — a group working with child domestics and their employers in Dhaka. Through intensive advocacy work in a suburb of Dhaka, Shoishab has helped bring about a change in the attitudes of employers. They now recognize the need to take moral and financial responsibility for the child domestic workers in their care, and have even begun activities to influence public opinion among other employers in their locality. They have established local norms for the treatment of child domestics which, despite the lack of legal enforcement, are upheld through peer pressure.

The task of advocacy, once more cannot be assessed. Anecdotal information is not appropriate for setting in motion a search for changes in social views. Proper information needs to be collected, as possible, on the

course of actions to help child domestics. These actions may include educational projects for drop-in and social centres (as described in this box), one of the kind of activity Shoishab initially undertook — and how it gained the confidence of both domestics and employers. And it should be axiomatic that advocacy should be led by local voices — NGOs, womens groups, human rights organizations — preferably in partnership with one another. Support can be provided by international organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental, but the lead must come from within the society.

In international discussion of child labour issues, the inevitability of child domestic workers is gradually being overcome. Ultimately, however, genuine improvement in their lot will have to come from attitudinal change in societies and households. And this should be the target. This is where the promotion of childrens rights and the creation of a climate in which the development of all children — however poor, however disadvantaged — is given proper weight can make a fundamental difference. In time, the spectacle of one child waiting on another, of absorbing as a part of upbringing an unbuilt sense of inferiority and servility, will be going round the clock and, like Cinderella praying for a magical release, will finally be consigned to the past.

This section contains information about some of the major intergovernmental organizations and international and regional NGOs working on issues relating to child domestic work. It also contains contact details for some of the local organizations mentioned in the text.

This listing is not meant to be comprehensive; nor does it represent a prioritization or ranking of organizations, but merely a first attempt to provide signposts in a highly complex field. It is hoped that the contacts listed will serve as links to organizations of various other types — international and national professional organizations, academic and other institutes, national NGOs and national bodies — whose work may be relevant to the topic. Some Internet information has also been included, which reflects websites available in March 1999; this information is, of course, subject to change.

Intergovernmental organizations

Many organizations within the United Nations family have responsibility for child labour issues and policies internationally, including those relating to child domestic work. WHO and UNESCO have looked into the issue from the points of view of health and education. UNICEF has an established policy for action on behalf of children in need of special protection measures, which is grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and which is being implemented in part through mainstreaming within existing programmes such as education and advocacy and the establishment of specific country, regional and global technical support networks. The Programme Division of UNICEF New York has a section for Child Protection, which includes a focus on child domestic workers. A number of United Nations human rights treaty bodies have also looked into the issue of child domestic work during the course of their work, as is evident in the 'General references' section of this *Digest*. These include the Committee on the Rights of the Child; the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the Commission on Human Rights, especially through the work of its Special Rapporteur on violence against women, as well as that of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, set up by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The United Nations organization dealing most extensively with child domestic work, often in collaboration with UNICEF, is the International Labour Organization, whose contact details are given below.

International Labour Organization

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC)
4 route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Tel.:+41 22 7998181
Fax:+41 22 7998771
E-mail: ipec@ilo.org
Contact
Werner K. Blenk, Programme Manager
Year founded
ILO founded in 1919, IPEC founded in 1992
Geographical scope
Latin America, Asia, Africa
Activities
Endeavours to develop methodologies and institutional capacity to address invisible forms of child labour, including child domestic work. Supports country-level action programmes for child domestic workers in 10 countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, the United Republic of Tanzania and Thailand. Activities include awareness-raising, skills training, non-formal education, counselling, provision of legal and medical assistance, and other support and outreach services. Also carries out research to identify legislative gaps. At the international level, cooperated with Anti-Slavery International in developing a handbook to provide guidance for research and action to organizations that would like to start work in this area. Also is proposing the adoption of new international labour standards that would have implications for child domestic workers.

Web home page
Contains detailed information concerning ILO/IPEC action on child domestic work and information on the girl worker.
www.ilo.org/public/english/90ipec/index.htm

International and regional NGOs

Anti-Slavery International (ASI)
Thomas Clarkson House
The Stableyard
Broomgrove Road
London SW9 9TL
United Kingdom
Tel.: +44 (0) 171 9249555
Fax: +44 (0) 171 7384110
E-mail: antislavery@gn.apc.org
Contact
Jonathan Blagbrough, Child Labour Officer
Year founded
1839
Geographical scope
Worldwide
Activities
Promotes the eradication of slavery and slavery-like practices, and freedom for everyone who is subjected to them. Has produced a handbook, in collaboration with ILO/IPEC, for research and action on child domestic workers – providing a step-by-step guide to NGOs in finding out about and acting on the situation of child domestic workers. Continues to highlight the abuse and exploitation of child domestic workers through research and campaigns. Has completed studies on child domestic workers in Bangladesh, Togo and Indonesia and is currently undertaking studies in Benin, Chennai (formerly Madras) and Costa Rica. Has also recently mounted a campaign highlighting the trafficking of children for domestic work in West Africa.
Information services
Members receive a quarterly newsletter, *The Reporter*, as well as free loan of videos and special offers on all new ASI publications. The ASI library is open to the public Monday to Friday. A publications list is available from the above address.

Web home page
English and French language site, contains information on ASI's latest campaigns, news and publications, the history of ASI and modern slavery, ASI's role in fighting slavery, how to join and how to take part in various campaigns. Also provided are the texts of ASI submissions to the United Nations Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery in 1997 and 1998.
www.charitynet.org/~asi

Child Workers in Asia (CWA)
Full mailing address:
P. O. Box 29 Chandrakasem
Bangkok 10904
Thailand
Postal address:
16/32 Charoensuk Nivet
Ratchadapisek Road 36
Bangkok 10900
Thailand
Tel.: +662 9300855, 9305316
Fax: +662 9300856
E-mail: cwanet@loxinfo.co.th
Contact
Taneeya Runcharoen, Executive Secretary
Year founded
1985
Geographical scope
South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
South-east Asia: Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam
Activities
Conducts regional activities with partner organizations in Asian countries; co-facilitates a regional task force on Child Domestic Workers; publicizes first-hand information on child domestic workers in collaboration with NGO partner organizations.
Information services
Issues a quarterly newsletter, *Child Workers in Asia*; publishes thematic-based publications, one of which is titled *Behind Closed Doors: Child Domestic Workers*; produces a photo bank CD ROM 'Images of working children in Asia'.

Web home page
Archive of past issues (1996-1997) of *Child Workers in Asia Newsletter*, which contain numerous articles about child domestic workers; update of CWA activities; forum for working children. Links to other child labour- related sites.
http://www.cwa.tnet.co.th

Defence for Children International

Costa Rican Section (DCI Costa Rica)
P.O. Box 4594-1000
San Jose
Costa Rica
Tel.: +506 2228043/2579414
Fax: +506 2581027/2255257
E-mail: dnicos@sol.racsa.co.cr
Web home page: being constructed
Contact
Virginia Murillo, Executive President
Year founded
In Costa Rica, 1994
Geographical scope
Central America and the Caribbean
Activities
Carries out research on alternatives to child labour, commercial sexual exploitation, violence against children and child domestic work; organizes training programmes; disseminates research results; runs programmes for children and adolescents. A member of the National Committee against Child Labour, promotes the National Forum on Child Domestic work.
Information services
Maintains a reference centre on children's rights that contains educational and training material.

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Environmental Development Action in the Third World / Youth in Action Team (ENDA TM/Jeuda)
54, rue Carnot
B.P. 3370
Dakar
Senegal
Tel.: +221 8212113/8217403
Fax: +221 8235157
E-mail: jeuda@enda.sn
Web home page: www.enda.sn
Contact
Fabrizio Terenzioa
Regional Coordinator of ENDA Jeuda
Year founded
1972
Geographical scope
Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe
Activities
Supports self-help groups, economic and health initiatives; promotes self-defence; organizes alternative education classes; provides management training and training on participatory action research techniques; runs classes in knitting, crocheting, sewing, dyeing, and cooking.
Information services
Publishes *A letter from the street*, a liaison and support bulletin for working and shantytown children, with articles written by the children themselves. Releases one issue a year in 12,000 copies; 17 issues released so far. Working children sell their own copies; also mailed free-of-charge worldwide. Produced in four languages (French, English, Portuguese and Spanish). Also publishes *Jeuda* (three to four issues a year), which addresses youth topics in Africa, Latin America and India. More than 100 issues released so far, mostly in French, but some issues also in English, Portuguese and Italian. Also provides information on upcoming meetings of working children's youth organizations and end-of-meeting reports or declarations.

International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB)
Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE)
63, rue de Lausanne
CH-1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 7313248
Fax: +41 22 7317793
E-mail: bice@dial.eunet.ch
Contact
Secretary General
Year founded
1948
Geographical scope
International
Activities
Carries out activities that include psychosocial support; awareness-raising about rights and responsibilities, building on resilience and current and potential strengths of domestics and their self-help capacities; legal aid, particularly in case of dismissal (reimbursement of indemnities); educational and vocational activities (literacy, home economics, sewing); health education, including sexual education and Aids prevention; primary health care; easing working conditions (one day off); facilitating participation at training opportunities offered by ICCB; mediation between domestics and their employers; support to obtain valid identity cards; training of placement agencies for domestic workers; networking with government and other NGOs; media campaigns to raise public awareness and initiate social mobilization.
Information services
Briefing on current conditions of child domestic workers, newspaper articles, publication of *Child domestics in Abidjan* (in French), 8-minute video on Josiane, child domestic worker in Abidjan (in French).

International Save the Children Alliance
275-281 King St.
London, W6 9LZ
United Kingdom
Tel.: +44 181 748 2554
Fax: +44 181 2378000
E-mail: info@save-children-alliance.org
Contact
Rachel Marcus and Diana Dalton
Year Founded
1919
Geographical scope
International
Activities
Carries out advocacy in local, regional and international forums on child labour issues, including child domestic work. Through individual members, or coalitions of members in some regions, provides technical and/or financial support to organizations active on child domestic work.
Information services
Publications and annual report.

Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC)
No. 7, Second Floor,
109-West, Sardar Begum Plaza,
Blue Area, P.O. Box 301
Islamabad
Pakistan
Tel.: +92 51 279255
Fax: +92 51 279256
E-mail: Sparc@associates.sdnpk.undp.org
Contact
Anees Jillani, National Coordinator
Year founded
1992
Geographical scope
South Asia
Activities
Conducts research into children's rights issues; seeks to create awareness through advocacy, dissemination of information and lobbying with Governments. Recent awareness-raising campaign, under heading "A child employed is a future destroyed", targets employers of child domestic workers.
Information services
Publications and up-to-date information on children's rights issues.

World Association for Orphans (Action to Stop Child Exploitation) (WAO-AFRIQUE)
399, 168 rue Tokoin Solidarité
B.P. 80242
Lomé
Togo
Tel.: +228 214113
Fax: +228 217345
E-mail: wao-afrique@bibway.com
Contact
Cléophas Mally, Director
Year Founded
1990
Geographical scope
Eight countries in Africa
Activities
Conducts surveys, provides non-formal education, organizes income-generating activities, carries out advocacy and promotes social mobilization.
Information services
Survey results, experiences with the grass-roots programme.

Local organizations

Foyers Maurice Sixto
Brochette 99, rue St.-Luis #89
Carrefour,
Box 11095
Haiti
West Indies
Tel.: +509 342637
Contact
Miguel Jean-Baptiste, Director

Fundação Abrinq pelos Direitos da Criança
Rua Lisboa, 224 - Jardim América
CEP 05413-000
São Paulo - SP
Brazil
Tel.: +55 11 8810699
Fax: +55 11 8810699
Email: info@fundabrinq.org.br
Web home page: http://www.fundabrinq.org.br (see section /trabalhoinfantil)
Contact
Sergio Mindlin, President

Kuleana
P.O. Box 27
Mwanza
Tanzania
Tel.: +255 68 500911
Fax: +255 68 500486
E-mail: kuleana@sukumanet.com

National Domestic Workers' Movement
104-A, St. Mary's Apartments
Nesbit Road
Mazagon
Mumbai - 400 010
India
Tel: +91 22 3780903, 3702498
Fax: +91 22 3771131
E-mail: admin@hwm.ilbom.ernet.in
Contact
Jeanne Devos, ICM

Shoishab Bangladesh
97 Iqbal Road
Mohammadpur
Dhaka - 1207
Bangladesh
Tel.: +880 2 819873
Fax: +880 2 9122130

Visayan Forum Foundation
2873 Lamayan St
Sta. Ana
Quezon City
Metro Manila
Philippines
Tel.: +63 2 563 4514
Fax: +632 563 4514
E-mail: visforum@skynet.net
Contact
Cecilia Flores Oebanda

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[13] Blanchet, T., *Lost Innocence, Stolen Childhoods*, University Press Limited/Rädda Barnen, Bangladesh, 1996.

[14] Boyden, J., B. Ling and W. Myers, *What Works for Working Children*, UNICEF International Child Development Centre and Rädda Barnen, Sweden, 1998.

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New Release

UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office has just published a report of and a study prepared for a sub-regional workshop on 'Trafficking in child domestic workers, in particular girls in domestic service in West and Central Africa', held in Cotonou, Benin, on 6-8 July 1998.

The report is available in French and English. Contact UNICEF, Bureau Regional pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre, 04 BP 443 Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, Fax +225 22 76 07.

Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959
Principle 9: The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form.
The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development.

ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), 1973
Article 1: Each Member for which this Convention is in force undertakes to pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour and to raise progressively the minimum age for admission to employment or work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons.
Article 2: 1. Each Member which ratifies this Convention shall specify ... a minimum age for admission to employment or work ... [that] shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years.
Article 7: 1. National laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons 13 to 15 years of age on light work which is
(a) not likely to be harmful to their health or development; and
(b) not such as to prejudice their attendance at school, their participation in vocational orientation or training programmes approved by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
Article 32: States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

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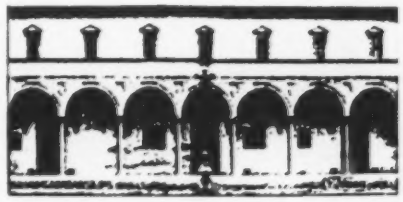
PAST ISSUES

ID 1: Ombudswork for Children, 1997, 20 pp.
This *Digest* provides information on the recent and expanding phenomenon of ombudsmen/commissioners for children. It discusses the history of ombudswork, patterns in the origin, development, mandate and status of the different types of ombudsman offices, the functions of ombudswork in theory and practice, and characteristics essential to this kind of work. It ends with details of 16 existing ombudsmen/commissioners for children and a selected bibliography on the topic.

ID 2: Children and Violence, 1997, 24 pp.
This *Digest* explores interpersonal violence to and by children, using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as its framework. Sexual abuse and exploitation, children's involvement in armed conflict, the prevalence of violence involving children and the reasons that children become violent are among the main issues explored. The *Digest* ends with a discussion on strategies for combating violence involving children. Contact and programme details of regional and international NGOs working in this area, and a compilation of selected readings are also provided.

ID3: Juvenile Justice, 1998, 24pp.
The third *Innocenti Digest* deals with the main issues connected with children and young people coming into conflict with the law and contact with the justice system. It looks at standards and problems from arrest through to the court hearing and sentencing, use of custodial measures and ways of avoiding the child's unnecessary and counter-productive involvement with the formal justice system. It also covers prevention questions. Like previous publications in the series, it contains practical information on the major players and sources of further, more detailed information.

ID4: Intercountry Adoption, 1998, 24pp.
This *Digest* looks at intercountry adoption as one of a series of possible solutions for children unable to live with their families. Broadly accepted international instruments specify the conditions under which intercountry adoption should be undertaken if the rights and best interests of the children concerned are to be protected and fully respected. Although substantial efforts are being made to implement the standards and procedures set, current practices are often in violation of these norms. This *Digest* identifies abuses of intercountry adoption as well as the measures required to combat such violations and to uphold 'best practice' in this sphere. It also provides information on existing Central Authorities under the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, details of some major international and regional organizations active in this field and suggestions for further reading.



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This issue of the *Innocenti Digest* has been compiled principally in cooperation with Maggie Black and Jonathan Blagbrough (see p. 15). The authors would like to thank Neide Cassaniga for her help in compiling information for the *Digest*. Prior to her work with Anti-Slavery International, she was a researcher at the Centre for Research on Childhood at the University of Santa Ursula, Brazil, and an International Fellow at the Chapin Hall Centre for Children at the University of Chicago.

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The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF.

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We invite comments on the content and layout of the *Digest* and suggestions on how it could be improved as an information tool.

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